



**EPC**

A Global Movement of Evangelical Presbyterian Churches

February 26, 2018

Dear colleague in ministry,

This year's General Assembly will take place June 19-22 at Hope Presbyterian Church in suburban Memphis, Tennessee. We are excited about what God is going to do in our midst this June, and I wanted to give you some important details about our 38th General Assembly.

- Our theme is *Forward*, based on Philippians 3:13-14, "Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it on my own. But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining *forward* to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus."
- In response to your feedback, most of our Leadership Institute tracks on Tuesday afternoon will last approximately two hours (instead of all afternoon as in previous years). Many of these will be presented twice, allowing you to attend leadership development opportunities on two topics in one afternoon. Also, the tracks are categorized into Evangelism, Preaching, Discipleship, and Reformed Studies.
- We are welcoming three plenary speakers this year, each of whom will address our *Forward* theme on Wednesday in an inspirational way:
  - Immaculée Ilibagiza, survivor of the 1994 Rwandan genocide and author of *Left to Tell: Discovering God Amidst the Rwandan Holocaust*.
  - Greg Thompson, former director of New City Commons and current Director of Research and Strategy for Clayborn Reborn, an organization dedicated to restoring the historic Clayborn Temple in downtown Memphis.
  - Jennifer Ross, Director of Matthew's Ministry, the Special Needs outreach for the United Methodist Church of the Resurrection in Leawood, Kansas.
- Assembly business convenes on Wednesday afternoon, June 20.
- Business concludes on Friday evening, June 22.

I also would like to make you aware of important logistical changes at this year's Assembly. In an effort keep your registration fee as low as possible and focus on important issues (such as providing the most potential impact of our Leadership

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Institute), we continue to take steps to economize.

One of our largest expenses the past few years has been providing local transportation, i.e. shuttles from the hotels to/from the church and to local restaurants. Since so many of you have told us that you carpool with friends anyway—as well as the advent of ride-sharing services like Uber and Lyft—we decided to forego this cost.

Another change that I think you will applaud is a much-reduced Commissioner's Handbook. Last year's Handbook checked in at a binder-busting and bandwidth-choking 373 pages. I expect this year's Handbook to be reduced by about half, since approximately that much of the Handbook is comprised of reports from our permanent committees and boards. We are going to remove those reports from the Handbook and make them available online separately when they are finalized. Of course, recommendations from these committees for Assembly action and other information will be included in the Handbook.

### ***Business Items***

In 2016, the 36th General Assembly approved a motion calling for the formation of an interim committee to draft a pastoral letter on “Ministering to the Church and World on Issues Pertaining to Human Sexuality.” This committee will present its final draft of this Letter to the 38th General Assembly.

Four Descending Overtures from the 37<sup>th</sup> General Assembly will be presented for Assembly action. These can be found at [epc.org/ga2018](http://epc.org/ga2018).

In addition, recommendations from our permanent committees and boards will come before the Assembly for discussion and vote.

### ***Election and Certification of Commissioners—Now Through May***

Ruling Elders must be elected by the Session of a congregation to serve as Commissioners to the General Assembly. You may elect the same number of Ruling Elder Commissioners to the Assembly as you do to the Presbytery. Once your Ruling Elder Commissioners are elected, the Clerk of Session must notify the General

Assembly by using the Commissioner Certification Form available at [www.epc.org/ga2018/#certification](http://www.epc.org/ga2018/#certification). Without this certification, a Ruling Elder will not receive voting credentials at the Assembly.

All Teaching Elders who are active members of their presbyteries are eligible to vote at the Assembly and need no additional certification. However, they do need to complete program registration, which opens April 1.

### ***Program Registration—April/May***

Beginning April 1, Commissioners can register online and pay for fees, meals, and any other scheduled events. You do not have to wait until April 1 to reserve your hotel and rental car; hotel information is available now at [www.epc.org/ga2018](http://www.epc.org/ga2018). Commissioners should check the website above from time to time for any updates.

A registration-by-mail option will be available for those who require it; a printable PDF form will be available at [www.epc.org/ga2018](http://www.epc.org/ga2018). All registration fees double on June 1, so be sure to register by May 31.

### ***Memorials—Now Through May***

A special moment at each Assembly is when we give voice to our belief in the “communion of the saints” and honor those Ruling and Teaching Elders who have gone home to be with the Lord since the 2017 Assembly. To both facilitate reporting and maintain accuracy, please use the Memorials Form available at [www.epc.org/ga2018#memorials](http://www.epc.org/ga2018#memorials).

God bless you! We’re looking forward to a great meeting at this year’s General Assembly.



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